



**FRONT PAGE**  
Vance says Iran has agreed to allow nuclear inspectors  
Page No 1



**EDITORIAL**  
Balochistan's Child Marriage Prohibition Bill: A Long-Awaited...  
Page No 2



**BALUCHISTAN**  
PKNAP Chief Vows to Defend Pashtun Belt, Rejects...  
Page No 3



**NATIONAL**  
Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to be handed over to new owners this...  
Page No 4

First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

Rs. 10.00 Vol. VII: No. 240

Email address: dquettavoice@gmail.com  
Website: www.quettavoice.com

Tuesday 23, June, 2026

# QUETTA VOICE

## 17 Sensitive Districts: Balochistan Unveils Strict Muharram Security Plan Under CM Bugti

Qaseem Shah,  
Ali Hamza:

**QUETTA** — With Muharram-ul-Haram approaching, the Balochistan government has put law enforcement agencies on high alert, placing 17 districts under tight surveillance to prevent any security lapses.

Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti finalized the extensive security strategy during a high-level review meeting attended by top civil and military officials on Monday.

The provincial Home Department briefed the Chief Minister on the current threat matrix, revealing that 11 districts have been classified as highly sensitive, while 6 districts are marked as sensitive. To counter potential security threats, the provincial administration has rolled out a specialized Emergency Response Plan tailored specifically for the critical days of 9th and 10th Muharram.

What are the Security Arrangements for Muharram? The provincial government is deploying a multi-layered security blanket across Balochistan. Key measures include:

**Proceptive Surveillance:** Strict monitoring and advance security sweeps of all traditional procession routes (Jaloo) and congregation halls (Majalis).

**Inter-Agency Coordination:** Real-time data sharing and operational harmony between the police, Frontier



**Police, Security Placed on High Alert Ahead of Muharram Holidays in Quetta: Photo Quetta Voice**

Corps (FC), and intelligence agencies.

**Zero Tolerance for Hate Speech:** Special monitoring cells to track and curb provocative speeches or sectarian content,

both on the ground and across social media platforms.

"Protecting the lives and property of our citizens is the state's ultimate responsibility," Chief Minister Bugti emphasized.

"Anyone attempting to disrupt peace or fan the flames of intolerance will be dealt with strictly according to the law."

The Chief Minister also lauded religious scholars from all schools of thought for their

proactive role in fostering brotherhood, noting that community-led harmony is Balochistan's strongest defense against elements trying to sabotage peace during the holy month.

### PPP's Amjad Hussain elected as GB chief minister after members take oath

NEWS DESK:

The Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly elected PPP's Advocate Amjad Hussain as the chief minister on Monday, just hours after the newly elected assembly members took oath.

This came after the PPP's Imran Nadeem Shrigi and the PML-N's Malik Kifayatullah Rehman were elected as the assembly's speaker and deputy speaker, respectively.

Nadeem announced the election schedule for the leader of the House, gave until 7:40pm to file the nomination papers and withdrawals for the position of chief minister, and adjourned the proceedings. PPP's Hussain filed nomination papers, but no other candidate did so for the chief minister's position.

Subsequently, Nadeem announced that Hussain was elected as the GB CM unopposed.

Meanwhile, the GB speaker declared PML-N local president Hafeezur Rehman as the opposition leader in the house, saying the opposition members had submitted a requisition in this regard.

The assembly hall was crowded with the guests of members, journalists, politicians, visitors and VIPs, with the press galleries also filled with supporters.

PPP Central General Secretary Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, Information Secretary Qamar Zaman Kaira, GB Governor Syed Mehdi Shah, and other politicians were present in the VIP galleries. The supporters chanted slogans in favour of the winning candidates PPP gets speaker seat, PML-N grabs deputy roln the morning, a total of 30 members took the oath as the first session of the sixth GB Assembly convened in Gilgit.

## Vance says Iran has agreed to allow nuclear inspectors

NEWS DESK:

US Vice President JD Vance said on Monday that progress has been made in talks with Iran, with Tehran agreeing to allow nuclear inspectors and establish mechanisms to handle its frozen assets and manage ceasefires.

Speaking after talks in Switzerland, Vance also cited a mechanism to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, with technical talks set to continue in the days and weeks to come.

Conversations over nuclear inspections in Iran could start as soon as this week, he said.

Vance added that the Iranian delegation "threatened to walk out" during the talks, or "at least there were social media threats that they would walk out", but said that the negotiations went well past 1am last night, according to Al Jazeera.

"So they didn't walk out, and their technical team is still here in Burgenstock working with our technical team," the US vice president told reporters.

"What we told the Iranians yesterday is, 'When you guys exchange in what we millennials might call trash talk, you can't expect the president of the United States not to respond and not to correct the record.'"

He concluded his response by saying there was "a bit of threatening" and "whining but at the end of the day, the talks continued, and we made great progress".

Vance also said that IAEA nuclear inspectors are set to return to Iran to verify its compliance with the preliminary agreement, according to Al Jazeera.

"Our hope is that we get to the final deal and a permanent settlement. But right now, I think we've made great progress and we should all celebrate that in terms of when the nuclear inspectors are going to start," Vance told reporters.



**US Vice President JD Vance during his address in the Switzerland**

The US vice president said he phoned UN nuclear inspectors at 2am last night to let them know the developments, however, no one picked up the call.

"As you can expect, not many people are answering their phone at two in the morning," said Vance. "I expect that will happen at the minimum this week, but we think even some of those conversations with the inspectors and with the IAEA could happen as soon as today."

He also touched on the issue of Iran's frozen funds, as per Al Jazeera.

"We wanted to make sure that we set up a process where, if

we ever unfreeze Iranian assets, we can ensure that that Iranian money goes to help the people of Iran and not to fund terrorism," he told reporters.

"Jared Kushner actually came up with a very interesting solution with the Qataris, where basically — again if — there is any frozen Iranian assets that are unfrozen, then we have approval over that process, the Qataris have approval over that process, and then the money would actually go to buy to buy American corn, American corn and American wheat for the benefit of the Iranian people."

First US-Iran committee

meeting under Islamabad MoU 'positive and constructive', PM Shehbaz

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday welcomed what he described as significant progress in talks between the United States and Iran, saying a high-level meeting held in Switzerland had produced an agreement on a roadmap towards a final deal within the next 60 days.

In a statement posted on X following the conclusion of the first High-Level Committee Meeting under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, the premier said the discussions in Burgenstock, Switzerland, had

taken place in a "positive and constructive atmosphere".

"The discussions were held in a positive and constructive atmosphere and yielded encouraging progress, including agreement on a roadmap towards a final deal within 60 days, the establishment of a High-Level Committee to provide political oversight, and the commencement of further technical talks," Sharif said.

The prime minister praised both Washington and Tehran for their engagement in the process.

"I commend the leadership of both the United States as well as Iran for their continued commitment to constructive engage-

ment," he said, while also thanking "all brotherly and friendly countries for their valuable support in advancing this historic process."

Sharif singled out Qatar for its role in facilitating the negotiations.

"In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to our brotherly country Qatar, for its critical support in creating the conditions necessary for these negotiations to move forward," he said.

He also thanked Switzerland for hosting the talks, stating: "A word of thanks to the Swiss Government for their facilitation in hosting these talks."

The premier paid tribute to Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir, crediting him for helping advance the negotiations.

"I would like to pay special tribute to Field Marshal Asim Munir whose untiring efforts made these talks a success. His dedication, commitment and perseverance are indeed commendable without which there would have been no progress," Sharif said.

He further praised Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for their contributions.

"I would like to pay my warm compliments and heartfelt gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, for his diplomatic efforts along with his team at the Foreign Office," he said, adding: "I also deeply appreciate the hard work of Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi who contributed immensely to the success of these talks."

The prime minister said Pakistan would continue supporting efforts aimed at resolving disputes through dialogue.

"Pakistan will continue to play its honest and sincere role in advancing dialogue and diplomacy towards a peaceful and lasting resolution," he said.

# QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## Balochistan's Child Marriage Prohibition Bill: A Long-Awaited Step in the Right Direction



### Editorial:

The recent passage of the Child Marriage Prohibition Bill by the Balochistan Provincial Assembly is a landmark moment in the province's journey toward protecting children and promoting social justice. While many have long awaited this legislation, its adoption now is a cause for immense satisfaction, reflecting the government's commitment to addressing a critical societal issue.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, the provincial government has demonstrated professionalism, transparency, and determination in ensuring that this bill was enacted through proper legislative procedures.

The thorough review by assembly committees over the past six months shows a deliberate and consultative approach, pri-

oritizing consensus-driven lawmaking. This methodical process ensures that laws are not only enacted but are sustainable, widely supported, and rooted in the public interest.

While opposition voices, including those from JUI-F, have criticized the bill on religious grounds, their dissent is part of a healthy democratic debate. However, it is crucial to note that protecting children from early and forced marriages is a universally recognized human rights concern.

The government's decision to move forward, despite protests and a walkout by opposition lawmakers, underscores its dedication to the welfare of Balochistan's younger generations. Indeed, the enactment of this bill, though delayed, is a step in the right direction.

It signals a commitment to ending

harmful traditional practices that compromise children's health, education, and future prospects.

By taking this decisive action, the Balochistan government has set a precedent for social reform, human rights advocacy, and legislative responsibility in Pakistan.

In conclusion, the passage of the Child Marriage Prohibition Bill is more than just a legal milestone—it is a moral and social imperative.

The government deserves praise for prioritizing the welfare of children, implementing professional legislative processes, and taking a bold step that will benefit countless lives across the province. While dialogue and debate will always be part of democracy, today marks a day when governance acted in favor of justice, progress, and the future of Balochistan.

## Balochistan: Qila Saifullah Hailstorm Destroys 7M Fruit Trees, 18,000 Farmers Hit



### Atta Kakar:

A devastating hailstorm accompanied by powerful winds has caused widespread destruction across Qila Saifullah district in Balochistan, damaging more than 7 million fruit trees and affecting nearly 18,000 farmers and landowners.

The storm struck on April 18, severely impacting one of the province's most important horticultural regions and leaving thousands of rural families facing major economic uncertainty.

The disaster caused extensive damage to orchards, agricultural land, and sea-

sonal crops, particularly apple, apricot, and grape farms that form the backbone of the local economy.

Farmers say years of hard work and investment were wiped out within minutes as hail and strong winds tore through villages and farming areas across the district.

Local growers have described the situation as catastrophic, warning that many families may struggle to survive financially without immediate government assistance.

Agriculture remains the primary source of income for a large portion of Qila

Saifullah's population, and the destruction of fruit orchards is expected to have long-term economic consequences for the region.

Residents and farming communities have expressed frustration over delays in relief and compensation efforts.

Many affected farmers claim that official assessment and rehabilitation measures have been slow despite the scale of destruction.

Calls are growing for the provincial and federal governments to announce emergency compensation packages, interest-free agricultural loans,

and recovery support for affected communities.

Farmers and local representatives are also demanding restoration of damaged irrigation systems and the introduction of crop insurance mechanisms to help rural communities recover from climate-related disasters.

They argue that without urgent intervention, the crisis could deepen poverty and unemployment across the district.

The Qila Saifullah hailstorm has once again highlighted the vulnerability of Balochistan's agriculture sector to extreme weather events.

Experts warn that climate-related disasters, including hailstorms, droughts, and flash floods, are becoming increasingly frequent in the province,

placing additional pressure on farmers already struggling with limited infrastructure and rising production costs.

Analysts say stronger disaster management systems, climate-resilient agricultural policies, and faster

emergency response mechanisms are essential to protect rural livelihoods and ensure long-term stability in Balochistan's farming sector.

## Hypertension: The Silent Threat We Continue to Ignore

By Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi:

Every year, World Hypertension Day reminds us of a health crisis that continues to grow quietly across the globe. Unlike many diseases that arrive with immediate warning signs, hypertension often develops silently. A person may appear healthy, continue daily routines, and feel physically normal while high blood pressure gradually damages the heart, kidneys, brain, and blood vessels. This is why medical experts across the world describe hypertension as the silent killer.

In Pakistan, the burden of hypertension is increasing at an alarming pace. Rapid urbanisation, unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, smoking, stress, and lack of routine medical checkups have created conditions where cardiovascular diseases are becoming more common among both older and younger populations. Unfortunately, many individuals only discover they have high blood pressure after suffering from serious complications such as stroke, heart disease, or kidney failure.

Women Neglect Their Own Health, Prioritise Family

What makes hypertension particularly dangerous is the lack of awareness surrounding it. In many households, people still consider blood pressure problems to be



temporary conditions caused only by stress or fatigue. Self-medication and delayed medical consultation remain common practices.

A large number of patients discontinue medicines once they start feeling better, without understanding that hypertension often requires lifelong management and regular monitoring.

The challenge becomes even more serious in developing regions where access to healthcare facilities remains limited. In rural and remote areas, many people are unable to undergo routine health screenings due to economic diffi-

culties, long travel distances, or lack of awareness. Women, especially in conservative societies, frequently neglect their own health while prioritizing family responsibilities.

As a result, hypertension often remains undiagnosed until it reaches dangerous stages.

Another worrying trend is the increasing prevalence of hypertension among younger people. Fast food consumption, excessive use of digital devices, reduced physical activity, and rising mental stress are contributing significantly to this issue. The modern lifestyle

has distanced many people from healthy daily habits that once naturally supported physical wellbeing. Walking has been replaced by prolonged sitting, home-cooked meals by processed food, and social interaction by constant digital engagement.

Public Awareness Campaigns are Essential

Mental health also plays an important role in blood pressure related illnesses. Economic uncertainty, unemployment, work related pressure, and social stress contribute heavily to anxiety and chronic tension. When stress becomes a permanent part of life, it

directly affects the cardiovascular system. Unfortunately, mental health awareness remains weak in many societies, where emotional wellbeing is often ignored or misunderstood.

Preventing hypertension does not always require expensive treatment. In many cases, small but consistent lifestyle changes can significantly reduce health risks. Balanced diets, reduced salt intake, regular exercise, proper sleep, and avoidance of smoking can greatly improve cardiovascular health. Even simple daily habits such as walking for thirty minutes, drinking

enough water, and managing stress levels can make a noticeable difference.

Public awareness campaigns are essential in this regard. Governments, healthcare institutions, educational organizations, and media platforms must work together to educate people about the dangers of uncontrolled blood pressure.

Schools and colleges should also encourage health education programs that teach young people the importance of nutrition, physical activity, and preventive healthcare.

Technology can also become an effective tool in tackling hypertension.

Telemedicine, mobile health applications, and digital awareness campaigns can help reach communities that lack direct access to medical professionals. Shared meals with balanced nutrition, reduced dependence on unhealthy food, and encouragement for physical activity can create healthier communities within households themselves.

World Hypertension Day should not remain a symbolic observance marked only through seminars and official statements. It should encourage serious reflection on how modern lifestyles are affecting public health.

Hypertension is no longer a disease affecting only the elderly. It is becoming a widespread societal challenge that requires collective responsibility and long term commitment.

A healthier society cannot be built through seminars and official statements. It requires awareness, discipline, preventive care, and responsible choices at both individual and community levels.

The fight against hypertension begins not in emergency rooms but in our homes, schools, workplaces, and daily routines.

If societies truly wish to reduce the growing burden of cardiovascular disease, they must recognize one simple reality: Prevention is always more powerful than cure.

PKNAP Chief Vows to Defend Pashtun Belt, Rejects Hatred and Calls for Unity

Nail Kakar: KILLA SAIFULAH: Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party (PKNAP) Chairman Khushal Khan Kakar has declared that the party will relentlessly defend the Pashtun homeland...



hatred toward anyone, but we will not compromise on the defense of our land. We urge all warring factions not to turn Pashtun region into a battlefield...

Free Medical Camp Launched in Sanjavi to Provide Healthcare Services to Remote Communities

SANJAVI: A one-day free medical camp was officially inaugurated at the Veterinary Hospital Sanjavi under the special initiative of Provincial Minister for Community Management Department and Chairman of the Balochistan Food Au-

Advocate Abdul Nasir Tareen, and Assistant Commissioner Sanjavi Sher Shah Ghulazi. A large number of local residents, tribal elders, community leaders, and notable personalities were also present at the event, reflecting

services, and health awareness to local residents, helping address immediate healthcare needs and reducing the burden on families who may struggle to access treatment. Public Welfare and Community Develop-



thority, Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Domar, as part of ongoing efforts to improve public access to healthcare services in remote areas. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Sanjavi Municipal Committee Sanjavi Haji Khan Muhammad Domar, District Zariat Focal Person Haji Raz Muhammad Khan Domar, young political leader Malik Ayaz Khan Domar, District Livestock Officer Dr. Naveed,

strong public interest in the healthcare initiative. Healthcare Services for Underserved Communities Participants praised the establishment of the free medical camp, stating that such initiatives play a vital role in providing quality healthcare services to people living in remote and underserved regions where access to medical facilities is often limited. The camp aims to offer free medical consultations, basic healthcare

ment Speaking at the ceremony, attendees emphasized that welfare-oriented healthcare programs not only improve public health outcomes but also help strengthen trust between the government and local communities. They noted that providing accessible and affordable healthcare remains one of the most effective ways to improve quality of life and support social development in rural areas.

Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Meets Acting Japanese Consul General to Strengthen Cooperation in Education, Technology, and Renewable Energy

NEWS DESK: Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail met with Acting Consul General of Japan Mr. Takahiro Tamura in Karachi to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Japan, with a particular focus on education, technology, renewable energy, and youth development.



arship Program to support deserving students enrolled in public sector universities across the province. Mandokhail noted that access to quality education and professional training is essential for preparing the next generation to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy. Support for Solar Energy Projects in Universities: The governor thanked Japan for its interest in supporting solar energy projects at several educational institutions, including: BUTEMS University

Balochistan Adviser Nasim-ur-Rehman Malakhel Welcomes Reduction in Petroleum Prices, Praises PM Shehbaz Sharif's Public Relief Measures

QUETTA: Balochistan Adviser for Environment and Climate Change Nasim-ur-Rehman Malakhel has welcomed the recent reduction in petroleum prices, describing the move as a positive and much-needed relief for the public amid ongoing economic challenges.

mitted to serving the nation and is working tirelessly to improve the lives of citizens. Malakhel expressed hope that the government would continue introducing similar public-friendly measures in the future, enabling people to benefit from greater economic stability and improved living standards.

He added that sustained efforts to support citizens and key economic sectors would contribute to national growth, social stability, and enhanced quality of life for the general public. Nasim-ur-Rehman Khan Malakhel welcomes reduction in petroleum prices. He praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for prioritizing public relief. Lower fuel prices expected to benefit transportation, agriculture, and businesses. Government committed to reducing economic pressure on citizens.

Balochistan Irrigation Officials Press for Fair Water Share During Guddu Barrage Visit

KASHMIRE: Superintendent Engineer Irrigation Circle Nasirabad Division Mudassar Zafar Khosa visited Guddu Barrage to review water supply and canal distribution issues concerning Balochistan's allocated share of water.



Unrani and Secretary Irrigation Sohail Mir Rehman Baloch are actively pursuing the matter through inter-provincial coordination and dialogue to ensure Balochistan receives its rightful share of water under established regulations.

He said the decision would not only benefit ordinary citizens but would also have a positive impact on the transportation, agriculture, and business sectors, helping to reduce operational costs and ease financial pressure on consumers.

Strengthening Public Confidence: The provincial adviser further stated that welfare-oriented initiatives help strengthen trust between the government and the people.

He said that the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) remains

Nasirabad Deputy Commissioner Reviews Healthcare Services, Orders Strict Action Against Staff Absenteeism

NASIRABAD: Deputy Commissioner Virender Lal chaired an important meeting of the District Health Committee to review healthcare services across Nasirabad, with a special focus on medical facilities in remote and underserved areas of the district.



The deputy commissioner directed the District Health Officer and medical superintendents to ensure the regular attendance of doctors and paramedical staff at their assigned work places. He instructed health officials to conduct periodic field visits and closely monitor the performance of healthcare facilities.

Father of Quetta Commissioner Shahzaib Khan Kakar Passes Away After Brief Illness

QUETTA: Haji Gulam Sarwar Khan Kakar, father of Quetta Division Commissioner Shahzaib Khan Kakar, passed away after a brief illness, family sources confirmed on Monday.

His passing has been met with deep sorrow among family members, relatives, friends, government officials, and members of the local community, who have expressed their condolences and sympathy to the bereaved family.

Urak, Quetta. Condolence gatherings (Fateha Khawani) will be held at House No. 8-A, Chiltan, Housing Scheme Extension, Quetta, where relatives, friends, and well-wishers may offer their condolences to the family. Messages of grief and condolences have continued to pour in from various social, political.

ance of Basic Health Units (BHUs) and public hospitals, including the attendance of doctors and paramedical staff, availability of medicines, healthcare infrastructure, and operational challenges faced by health workers. Officials also reviewed measures aimed at improving healthcare delivery and ensuring that residents have access to timely and quality medical services. Government Prioritizing Public Healthcare: Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Virender Lal stated that the Government of Balochistan considers the provision of quality and timely healthcare services among its top priorities. He emphasized that all Basic Health Units and government hospitals must remain fully functional and that healthcare personnel should perform their duties with dedication and professional-

Advertisement for a public meeting or event, including contact information and a QR code. Text: 'ناظم بازار ناسراباد' and 'PRQ No:5833/22-06-2026'.

## Pakistan will continue to play 'honest, sincere role' in advancing dialogue, says PM after US-Iran talks in Switzerland

**NEWS DESK:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed Pakistan's continued commitment to play an "honest and sincere role in advancing dialogue in what were his first remarks after the conclusion of a high-level meeting between the United States and Iran under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding aimed at ending the Middle East conflict.

In a post on X, PM Shehbaz expressed satisfaction at the "successful conclusion" of the meeting held in Switzerland and Burgstock.

The premier stated that the discussions were held in a "positive and constructive atmosphere and yielded encouraging progress," which included a roadmap towards the final deal within 60 days, the establishment of a high-level committee for political oversight and the commencement of further technical talks.

PM Shehbaz commended the leadership of both the US and Iran for "continued commitment to constructive engagement." He also expressed thanks for "all brotherly and friendly countries for their valuable support in advancing this historic process," particularly Qatar.

The premier thanked Qatar for its "critical support" in creating the necessary conditions for the negotia-



tions to move forward. "A word of thanks to the Swiss Government for their facilitation in hosting these talks," PM Shehbaz said. He also paid a "special tribute" to Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir.

PM Shehbaz said that CDF Munir's "unfiring efforts" ensured the success of the talks.

"His dedication, commitment and perseverance are indeed commendable without which there would have been no progress," the premier remarked.

He further thanked Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as well as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

"Pakistan will continue to play its honest and sincere role in advancing dialogue and

diplomacy towards a peaceful and lasting resolution," PM Shehbaz concluded. "Meanwhile, DPM Dar "warmly welcomed" the "substantial progress" achieved at the talks. He also congratulated PM Shehbaz and CDF Munir for their "visionary leadership and tireless efforts in achieving this milestone."

"I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the constructive spirit shown by the United States of America as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the implementation of the Islamabad MoU and commend their continued commitment to dialogue and diplomacy. My deep gratitude also to the State of Qatar for its important role in the mediation process along with Pakistan," he said.

"A team from our

Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to remain engaged with the parties for technical-level talks for the remainder of the week at Burgstock, Switzerland," he said.

"Pakistan has been and will continue to play its role for achieving the goal of lasting peace and stability in the region and beyond," Dar said.

Iran's senior envoys left for Switzerland on Monday after a marathon negotiating session with the United States, state media reported, as mediators claimed progress towards a definitive US-Iran deal.

The host nation said technical talks were set for immediately follow, with the sides at the beginning of a 60-day period to secure a long-term settlement.

The negotiators aim

to secure a long-term settlement.

## National Assembly (NA) passes Rs9.17tr demands for grants

**NEWS DESK:** The National Assembly on Sunday formally began passage of the federal budget for 2026-27, approving 125 demands for grants worth Rs9.17 trillion after rejecting 307 cut

Division, and 100 against 12 demands of the Finance Division. All cut motions were rejected by the house. The house approved Rs1.53 trillion for the Cabinet Division, rejecting all 90

Defence Production Rs41.2 billion. The National Assembly received Rs150.1 billion, Federal Education and Professional Training Rs1.2126 trillion and Foreign Affairs Rs681.7 billion. House



motions moved by the opposition through a majority vote.

The House met with Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in the chair. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented demands for grants relating to the National Assembly, the Senate, and 31 ministries and divisions for approval.

The opposition moved 307 cut motions, including 90 against 18 demands of the Cabinet Division, 116 against six demands of the Energy

and Works was allocated Rs223.1 billion. Human Rights Rs23.3 billion, Industries and Production Rs295.3 billion, and Interior and its attached departments Rs54.4 billion.

Information and Broadcasting Division received Rs275.7 billion, Information Technology Rs420.7 billion and Inter-Provincial Coordination Rs2.0 billion. Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs were allocated Rs31.8 billion. Law and Justice Rs249.1 billion, and Maritime Affairs

Among other approvals, the House cleared Rs389 billion for the Climate Change Division, Rs279.9 billion for Commerce, and Rs1.25 trillion for Communications.

Defence allocations stood at Rs3.06723 trillion, while Rs2.11 billion was approved for the

Planning Division Rs372.1 billion, and Privatisation Division Rs17.4 billion.

Railways received Rs1113 trillion, Religious Affairs Rs24 billion, Science and Technology Rs197.4 billion, and Water Resources Rs1.07 trillion. Separately, debate on Rs1.24286 trillion worth of demands relating to the Interior, National Food Security, and Poverty Alleviation Divisions, along with 280 opposition cut motions will continue on Monday.

## Newly elected members of GB Assembly sworn in

**NEWS DESK:** Newly elected members of the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Assembly were sworn in on Monday by outgoing Speaker Nazir Ahmed Advocate.

A total of 30 members took the oath as the first session of the sixth assembly convened in Gilgit. These included 21 lawmakers elected on general seats, six women members on reserved seats and three technocrats.

The results for three general constituencies remain pending due to ongoing legal

and electoral proceedings. The session was subsequently adjourned until 3pm.

The assembly session was summoned for 9am on Monday for swearing in the newly elected representatives, and for the speaker and deputy speaker elections.

Following the June 7 election, the PPP has won 13 seats, the PML-N nine, the Istekham-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) six, and Majlis Wahdat-i-Mustameen (MWM) and a PIT-backed independent one each.

The PML-N and the IPP have decided to support the PPP in the elections for the chief minister, speaker and deputy speaker. It should be mentioned that the PPP has announced that it would form a government in GB with the support of the PML-N.

PPP's Advocate Anjad Hussain is expected to be elected chief minister, while Imran Nadeem is expected to become the speaker. Meanwhile, PML-N's Malik Kifayat is slated to be the new deputy speaker.

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was handed over to its new owners before the end of the current month, completing a privatisation transaction that had been delayed for months after bidding in December last year because of international regulatory requirements.

"It will be handed over to the new buyers by the end of this month," Prime Minister's Adviser on Privatisation Muhammad Ali told Dawn over the weekend, adding that all local and international regulatory approvals had now been completed.

Ali said the national flag carrier's operating rights in various countries had to be transferred to the privatised operator, requiring several regulatory processes, which had now been completed. The local law relating to PIA conversion into a public limited entity also stood amended.

Responding to a question, he said PIA's decision-making remained in the public sec-

## Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to be handed over to new owners this month

tor for now, but under the sale and purchase agreement, the private owners were fully on board on all operational and financial decisions.

He said the exemption of equipment, accessories and lease and purchase of aircraft from taxes for 15 years after privatisation had been cleared by the Interna-

press conference, Finance Secretary Imdadullah Boodi had also said special tax exemptions for PIA were part of the privatisation agreement and could not be extended to other operators at this stage. Parliamentary committees have also objected to the discriminatory treatment during debate



national Monetary Fund to facilitate the transaction and given legal cover in the Finance Bill 2026-27.

Ali conceded that the same tax treatment was not currently avail-

able to other airlines because the IMF's consent was limited to PIA. For other operators, the government would again take up the matter with the Fund for equitable treatment, he added. Interestingly, the IMF has consistently demanded removal of policy distortions to improve ease of doing business, but in this case allowed a major policy distortion to the disadvantage of other airlines operating in and from the country.

At the post-budget

on the Finance Bill 2026-27 and asked the government to provide a fair and equitable environment to all operators. In response to a question, Ali said

Islamabad International Airport would be privatised during FY2026-27, for which the Asian Development Bank had been selected as transaction adviser with certain changes in contract conditions.

The Manila-based lending agency would be formally appointed as transaction adviser very soon after approval by the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation, he said. He said the process for hiring financial advisers for a consortium of Karachi and Lahore international airports would begin immediately, as previous government-to-government discussions had not progressed as desired. Both airports were expected to attract more than \$500 million each in fresh investment, he added.

Ali said the target for major sale transactions during FY27 included five private PIA's distribution companies in two lots. The sale of Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Islamabad Discos is expected in October, November and December this year.



## Sindh declares June 25, 26 as public holidays on account of Ashura

**NEWS DESK:** The Sindh government on Monday announced public holidays on June 25 (Thursday) and 26 (Friday) on account of Ashura.

A notification to this effect was shared on the social media platform X by the Sindh Information Department. The notification, issued by Sindh's chief secretary, said, "The government of Sindh, hereby declares June 25 and 26,

2026 as public holidays throughout the province of Sindh, on the occasion of Ashura (Muharram 9 and 10, 1448 AH)."

It added that all offices, autonomous bodies, semi-autonomous bodies, corporations and local councils under the administrative control of the government of Sindh, except essential services, would remain closed. Muharram is a month of mourning, observed in particular by Shia Muslims worldwide.

It commemorates the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD, where, amongst many, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), Imam Husain (RA), was martyred and other family members were martyred or subjected to humiliation.

Religious processions are also held across the country.

presented in the Senate on June 15. It was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on IT and Telecommunication on June 15, before being deferred. On Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also formed a committee to review the bill and submit its recommendations.

In a post on the social media platform X on Monday, Rehman said, "For the record, the PPP in the Senate will not be passing any IT/PTA/RWA legislation which is not thoroughly discussed therebefore in the Standing Committee of the Senate with our deletions assured in the final bill."

She maintained that the bill transmitted by the NA was stopped in the Senate "by us because it still contained

## Sherry says PPP will not support any PTA bill in Senate

**NEWS DESK:** Amid vocal criticism of a bill aimed at advancing digitalisation across the country, PPP Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman said on Monday that the party would not support any such legislation in the Senate unless it was "thoroughly discussed therebefore" in the relevant standing committee and the party's proposed deletions were ensured in the final bill.

Concerns about the intentions behind the Pakistan Telecommunication (Amendment) Bill 2026 have intensified due to the timing of the government's attempt to secure its passage through both houses of Parliament and criticism against its clause to allow telecommunication companies to use public land without a fee.

The bill was approved by the National Assembly (NA) on June 11, a day before the presentation of the federal budget 2026-27, and was

not deleted when the bill was transmitted to us in the upper House, which is why we insisted on sending it to the standing committee in the Senate," she added.

"We are certainly not against fibreisation in Pakistan, but have been refusing to pass the current bill with existing encroachments on right of way, egregious penalties and even redressal mechanisms, which should not be in the hands of the executive," she asserted.

"While appreciate the constitution of a government committee to look into its flaws, these should be brought to the standing committee once re-proposed. Our chair is fully briefed," she said.

"There is no hurry to push it through without satisfying us and other representatives. I would even suggest a public hearing to give people both sides that they are being heard," the senator said.

